

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: William Ishida, 78, accountant

*"If a person wanted to build up a home in the farm or build up a warehouse or something . . . what they did is that they hired one carpenter and the rest, all the helpers, the kumiai people went and help. And like when they have wedding, the kumiai people will go and help. In those days the party lasts for three days at least, you know . . . time was not valuable like now. Nowadays, time is valuable. You cannot spend all day, you know that's big difference, but kumiai spirit, I think, is wonderful, yeah."*

William Minoru Ishida, the oldest of four children, was born in the plantation community of Honokaa on October 11, 1902. About three years later, the Ishidas moved to Captain Cook, Kona and subsequently leased five acres of coffee land in Kainaliu.

William completed the seventh grade at Konawaena and Kyōritsu Japanese School. Later, he continued his education and received a H.S. certificate from Konawaena Adult High School.

Prior to the 1930s, William worked for the Ka'u Sugar Plantation, Kona Development (KD) Co., Bishop Estate agent Thomas C. White, and Bishop Bank. For a short time, he and Kyohei Kanehiro operated a store but experienced financial losses when the KD Co. sugar plantation closed.

In 1932, he became a coffee broker and two years later began a public accounting business. From 1941, for about 15 years, he worked as the Kona Community Federal Credit Union Treasurer. In 1956, he opened a Finance Factors branch where he continues to work today.

He has been an active member of the Central Kona Union Church and the Bank Kumiai. He is also a member of the Rotary Club of Kona and the Japanese Civic Association. William has two children, seven grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

Tape Nos. 9-72-1-81 and 9-73-1-81

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

William Ishida (WI)

February 11, 1981

Kealahou, Kona, Hawaii

BY: Faye Komagata (FK)

- FK: This is an interview with Mr. William Ishida at his home in Kealahou, Hawaii. Today's date is February 11, 1981. Mr. Ishida can you tell me when and where you were born?
- WI: When and where I was born, I was born in Honokaa, Hamakua District on this island, the Big Island.
- FK: When?
- WI: On October 11, 1902.
- FK: How many brothers and sisters do you have?
- WI: One brother and two sisters.
- FK: And what number were you?
- WI: I was the eldest of the family.
- FK: What were your parents' names?
- WI: Hamakichi is the father, Chiye is my mother.
- FK: And where were they from?
- WI: They are from Fukuoka-ken, Miyako-gun, Kyushu, Japan.
- FK: Do you happen to know why they came to Hawaii?
- WI: Why did they come to Hawaii, well at that time they were getting a group, they came as a group, not individually.
- FK: Oh, I see.
- WI: They all had a contract, I don't know exactly how many came on the ship but that's how it is.

FK: About when was that?

WI: It was the early part of 1902.

FK: They came, oh, they came around 1900?

WI: No, they must have come around 1902, they left Japan in 1902, the early part of the year.

FK: Um, what kind of work did they do when they came?

WI: In the cane field?

FK: Yeah, did they go directly to Honokaa?

WI: Yeah, they went to Paauhau, next to Honokaa, that's where they were employed.

FK: How long were their contracts?

WI: Three years.

FK: So after their contract to work, what happened then?

WI: Well, they left the plantation and went to work for a ranch, right up in Honokaa.

FK: Do you know what ranch?

WI: Well, they used to call him Reichert, I don't know the full name.

FK: How old were you when they went to the ranch?

WI: Well, I was about two, I think.

FK: So that's about 1904 then?

WI: Yeah, 1904 or 1905, maybe the early part of 1905.

FK: Did they stay very long?

WI: Where, at the ranch?

FK: Yes.

WI: Maybe less than a year anyway, I don't know.

FK: And after that did they come here?

WI: Yeah, they moved to Kona.

FK: What part of Kona was that?

WI: Well, I don't know, they had a friend in Keopu, so they came to the friend's place. I don't know how long they stayed, maybe a month, two months then they moved to Captain Cook, right over there. Then they worked in the coffee fields.

FK: Who was that for?

WI: The Captain Cook Coffee Company.

FK: Then do you know how long they were doing that?

WI: Oh, maybe one season.

FK: You mean just to get settled here?

WI: Yeah.

FK: And then what did they do after that?

WI: What?

FK: What did they do after that?

WI: Then they bought a coffee farm, just below Weeks Garage, now it's the Kona Medical Associates, just below there. Then I was raised in the coffee farm.

FK: So it was about 1906 or so when they came to Kona then?

WI: Yeah, must have been.

FK: Who did they purchase the coffee land from or was it a lease?

WI: It's a lease, leased directly from Ackerman.

FK: Do you know the terms of the lease?

WI: What?

FK: Do you know the terms of the lease?

WI: Oh, I think at that time probably about 15 years. Maybe 10--10 or 15 years.

FK: Do you have any idea about how much it was?

WI: How much rent?

FK: Yeah.

WI: No, I have no idea.



FK: Do you know how much they had to pay?

WI: Pay for what?

FK: The lease?

WI: No, I don't know.

FK: Do you know what your parents were doing in Japan before they came?

WI: Where, in Japan?

FK: Ah huh.

WI: No, I have no idea.

FK: What kind of house did you live in?

WI: What kind of house?

FK: Can you describe your house?

WI: Well, that's very interesting.

(Laughter)

WI: In those days, they never had a real carpenter, you know. When the farmers made up their house, you know several farmers came and helped. It was a simple house. One side of the house was a wall built of stone, then it was just, I don't know what you call, one side roof. You know it's not the gable roof, it's just one side. It's about 16 feet, I think, 16 feet wide and 24 feet long.

FK: Wow.

WI: (One wall is stone--is easier, see. Then other three sides will be just lumber--it saves money, too. Don't have to buy so much lumber and materials. Kona has lots of rocks. (Laughter) Then the kumi people come help you, too, of course--as long as you give refreshments.)

(Laughter)

FK: (It seems that was a typical house.)

WI: (Yes. House was usually built on a slope. You know Kona land is slope. We didn't use a stone wall especially for the house. You excavate a little one side--that's a wall already, and the rocks prevent the dirt from coming down and keep it smooth, too. We use gunny sacks or something for drapery to keep rocks from being exposed in the house. Rats lived in the rocks.)

FK: (Rats?)

WI: (Oh yeah. Lots--sometimes we set traps for them.) And then they had the kitchen, with fireplace where they cooked the meals and a space for dining table made of lumber. The kitchen or another extension was around 10 feet or 12 feet square. And the floor of the kitchen part was all dirt, not lumber. (The wood-burning stone fireplace was low and against the stone wall, big enough for about two pots.)

FK: Did you have any rooms divided up?

WI: Room?

FK: Ah huh.

WI: We had no room.

FK: Just one room?

WI: When they want a room, they had a curtain to draw, which served as a partition for another room.

FK: How about furniture?

WI: Furniture? The only furniture was the kitchen table and bench, no furniture in the living room, we all squat on the floor with cushion.

FK: How about when you slept?

WI: Well, we had futons then, when you get up, we all fold it and put it on the side. Night time, we just spread that on the floor and then we slept.

FK: How about the outside of your house, did you have a garden or anything like that?

WI: You mean outside?

FK: Yeah, outside.

WI: Well, it was all surrounded by coffee. There was no particular place for a garden.

FK: Was it developed land already or did you plant from seedlings?

WI: Well, there were little coffee trees, maybe about one acre, I think we planted, we planted coffee.

FK: Who did you sell your coffee to?

WI: Well, we sold to the store, you know the store was acting like a middleman for American Factors. American Factors was the dealer so

when we harvest coffee we gave it to the store because we get, you know, yearly advance for grocery for one year and we paid by the crop. In between we hardly have any way of making money. Sometimes parents went out to earn money, just for the spending money, but we're wholly dependent on the coffee crop. So, we turned all the coffee, what we get, to the store and then the store advanced to us. The coffee goes to American Factors. The store gets advances from American Factors, yearly, once a year or twice a year. That's the way the store can afford to lend to the farmers.

FK: Did your parents ever have to hire anybody to help pick the coffee?

WI: Well, hardly--though, I don't know. We used to--all the kids used to pick coffee.

FK: Oh, even the small ones?

WI: Oh, yeah. Yeah, they pick coffee, if they are able to go to school, they are able to pick coffee, five years, six years old.

FK: Did you have any machinery at that time?

WI: We had the hand pulper and all the cherry was pulped by hand. We didn't have any engine or electricity at that time and so we all did it by hand. We did not have any drying platform to spread the coffee. (So, we made canvas with coffee bags, spread them on the ground and dried our coffee.)

FK: What about rain?

WI: Well when it rained you would gather it up and put iron on top.

FK: Put what?

WI: Put iron, roof iron on top.

FK: Oh, there was no place to store it?

WI: That's the way, right on the ground, put the iron cover on it.

FK: What about your water?

WI: We had small tanks to take the water from the roof. The tank was maybe about six feet by seven. Six feet high and seven feet in diameter.

FK: Oh, that's pretty small. Was it enough?

WI: Well, in the dry season we have to get the water from someplace else. At times we bought water for drinking purpose.

(Laughter)

FK: You needed water to wash your coffee though?

WI: Yeah, we used to wash the coffee but we didn't use very much water.

FK: Did you let the coffee accumulate then before you . . .

WI: Yeah, we get maybe around ten bags of cherry then we pulp it. (The following morning, we washed and spread on the canvas to dry.) We cannot accumulate too many, you know 20 or 30 bags at a time, we cannot do that.

FK: Did you have to help with the processing too or was it just your father?

WI: What do you mean by processing?

FK: You know, pulping and then washing and drying.

WI: I did, I helped, yeah, we used to get up early in the morning, about 4:00 o'clock in the morning.

(Laughter)

WI: To wash the coffee so by the time the sun came out, already it was spread on the canvas.

FK: And after that you used to go to school?

WI: That's right, we used to go to school.

(Laughter)

WI: Probably, you would like to live in that situation.

(Laughter)

FK: Well, I send mine out . . .

WI: You talk to the kids nowadays, well, they don't think anything of it. "Oh, that's an old story already," [they say.]

FK: How about hō hana? You know, weeding, hō hana?

WI: Hō hana, yeah. It was all by hand.

FK: No fertilizer?

WI: No, we didn't have any weed killer or grass poison, all by hand, hoeing.

FK: Do you recall any kind of problems--like with weather--that stands out in your mind, that affected the coffee?

WI: Well, once a year we used to have what we call a Kona storm. It used to come up pretty regular, every year. Now it has changed, we don't have that kind of storm.

FK: What kind of storm was that?

WI: Wind and rain, thunder.

FK: Oh, really?

WI: Yeah.

FK: I don't hear that too often.

WI: Well, we had a lot of eucalyptus trees, it's all blown down and gone now.

FK: Eucalyptus trees?

WI: Eucalyptus trees, you know in our area. All blown down by the wind.

FK: Uh, did you notice any farming techniques that might have changed as you were growing up as far as coffee or machinery?

WI: What's that question?

FK: Did you notice any changes in techniques or machinery as you were growing up?

WI: Well, the cultivation of the coffee is practically the same. You know the coffee tree, once you plant it, it lasts almost forever. There are many trees you know, 70 or 80 years old right now that are still producing, but we used to prune once a year. Cut the old branches and let the new shoots come out. And fertilizing too, that's about all we used to do, fertilize twice a year.

FK: What kind of trees did you mainly farm--coffee trees? There were different kinds of coffee.

WI: We used to have some Hawaiian coffee, but most of them were some other coffee. The kind that produces more.

FK: Did you ever sell directly to AmFac or was it always to the store?

WI: No, we didn't sell it directly.

FK: Were you able to make ends meet all the time?

WI: Well, only on the coffee crop its hard to make it. At that time the price was very low so we had to go out to do some work to get some spending money.

FK: When you say go outside to work, you mean your parents went outside to work also?

WI: Well, my mother used to go, my father hardly went to work. My father didn't. My mother used to go out and work for the neighbor. They had a bigger field than we had so they had to have some help too, for picking so, at that time she used to go work for ten hours and get paid 65 cents. One whole day, 65 cents. At that time, she was very thrifty so we got money, we used for spending during the month and during the summer months, while I was in school, during the summer months I used to help, you know, hoe, keep the farm in good condition. And in those years, the coffee used to ripen earlier then now. In July it starts to ripe, see. That's when the summer vacation is, July and August, we used to harvest quite a bit. The kids used to pick, but now the climate has changed too, you see. Therefore, the harvesting season is retarded. It starts about September or October. That's when the farmer had a problem in picking so they had what they called the school vacation. They worked hard to get the Department of Education to--only for Kona, during the coffee season--have extra time.

FK: Coffee schedule?

WI: Yeah, that's what it was called, coffee schedule to help harvest the coffee.

FK: Like the time that we're talking about, there was no County Extension Service Agents or anything like that, so how did your parents learn about planting coffee?

WI: How did they learn about coffee?

FK: Yeah, how did they learn, how did they know about coffee? Did they just ask their friends or . . .

WI: Well, coffee is easy, as far as I think. All you need is to plant then it starts to grow and it starts to bear.

FK: And in the process, I guess you pick up?

WI: Yeah, you learn from your friends, it's not very difficult because we never use any kind of machinery.

FK: Your parents ever talked about going back to Japan?

WI: Well they were, they wanted to save money and go back.

FK: They were planning to go back?

WI: Yeah. They were planning to go back and then they did go back.

FK: Was it to live?

WI: Huh?

FK: To live?

WI: Yeah, they went back to live. They sold the land, well, what we owned. Well I was already a teenager, 19 or 20 [years old] I think. They sold the land and then they went back.

FK: Did anyone else in your family go with them?

WI: Yeah, they took my sister along. So my sister went along with them.

FK: Um, as far as food is concerned, what did you folks eat in those days?

WI: Well, we used to plant as much vegetables as we can, then well, the meat, the fish.

FK: Where did you get your meat and fish?

WI: We used to have a meat market.

FK: Oh, really.

WI: You know this house here, the corner meat market right now, Kona Meat Market, it used to be run by the Greenwells, see, they had the ranch. So they used to slaughter the cattle and then they sell, so we used to buy from them.

FK: Oh, and you lived close enough, too.

WI: Huh?

FK: You lived close enough so you could just go over?

WI: Oh yeah, close enough, yeah. We used to walk to the school so that the walking was nothing.

FK: What about your fish then?

WI: Fish, we used to have peddlers, they used to come around.

FK: Who were the peddlers?

WI: Uh, they were some Chinese fellows, some part-Hawaiian, they used to peddle fish. Then some, well then the farmers used to go down and catch their own too, down at the sea.

FK: Some people had mentioned that the peddlers came by with donkeys.

WI: Yeah, that's right. They packed the fish on the donkeys, then they used to call out.



FK: How were they packed though?

WI: Well, we had no ice in those days, no ice. So, well they had some green ti leaves or something to keep them cool in.

FK: Oh.

WI: That's about all I know.

FK: What were the different kinds of vegetables that you folks grew?

WI: Well, the common kind like tomatoes, lettuce, cabbage and Japanese cabbage too, eggplant, pumpkins, cucumber. What else did I have . . . Papayas.

FK: Oh, fruits too?

WI: Papayas, we used to pickle papayas. You never heard of that. Well, you pickle the green papayas, that's good. I think you should know how to eat.

(Laughter)

WI: And they have this kind of squash that grows on the vine. They call this Portuguese 'uli yeah, you know. We used to have those.

FK: Had plenty of tsukemono to eat then?

WI: Yeah, had tsukemono, the pickles. Had daikon, you know and we had a lot of chicken. We raised our own chickens. The farmers used to raise their own chickens and let the chickens run loose so we never kept them in a coop.

FK: How do you know whether it's yours or your neighbors?

WI: Well, you know because the neighbors were not so close. Oh, you have to go maybe so many hundred feet to the neighbor. And usually there is a stone wall, between the next neighbor. But the chicken can fly off but they come back. They know their home because we fed them in the evenings, usually in the evenings and the chickens roost on the coffee trees, they were on their own, no coop.

FK: No coop?

WI: No, no. They sleep out on the trees, roost on the trees.

FK: How did you go about catching them if they were outside?

WI: Well, sometimes we use a long string with a loop on one end. (We lay the loop on the ground; then we feed the chicken. When the one we want to catch comes in the loop, we pull the string. The chicken is caught.)



FK: So when they get into the loop . . .

WI: Yeah, the feet, well, during the day we used to do that but in the evening we used to go out and catch them.

FK: Where, on the trees?

WI: Yeah, when they are roosting. We take our flashlight, in those days we didn't even have a flashlight. We take our lantern and go out and catch them.

(Laughter)

FK: Well, how about gathering eggs like that?

WI: Eggs, well the hen used to lay out in the field. So, we watch where the hen lays, after they lay the eggs, we just go and pick them up from the ground. And then sometimes we don't know, the hen gets smart, too. She would go little bit away from the place, in the shady place to lay the eggs, maybe they lay about a dozen to 15 eggs then they roost, see. Then when we feed the chickens as we don't have plenty chickens, maybe 20 or so at the most. So, if some hen don't come out, don't come back, we know that she must be roosting someplace. It takes 21 days to hatch, so after they hatch they come back with chicks. They come back with 10 or a dozen chicks.

FK: Did you have to worry about wild pigs in those days?

WI: No, we never had wild pigs where I lived.

FK: Did you keep any other kinds of animals?

WI: Well we used to keep some domestic pigs. Maybe one or two and when they grow we slaughter them, then we keep the meat, the pork for home use.

FK: Did you have a dog?

WI: No, I didn't, I never had a dog. I had a horse, you know my father wanted to go out, he always used to ride on the horse. And then he fed the horse sometimes but I always used to do most of the feeding. I used to go out in the field and cut grass and come back with a bundle of grass to feed the horse.

FK: Did the horse help you with your work, packing and things like that?

WI: Yeah, we used to use the horse for packing.

FK: How did your home and your coffee land that you had compare with the other people in your neighborhood?

WI: What's your question?

FK: Economically, how did your home compare with the others around where you were?

WI: We were not wealthy, we were a poor family. So, well, I don't know how to describe . . .

FK: Were the other coffee farmers the same?

WI: Most of the coffee farmers were not very wealthy. There were some wealthy people.

FK: Even in those days?

WI: Yeah, they were very thrifty and you know they come from different prefectures in Japan. Like Fukuoka people, they are not very good savers; but people from Yamaguchi, Hiroshima, those are the people that were very thrifty. They made money and saved money. So, among them there were some wealthy people.

FK: You talked about the work you had to do at home and the help you had to do. How did you feel about having to do all this?

WI: How did I feel?

FK: Uh huh.

WI: Well, I used to go out and work while I was attending school, during summer vacation. But that was just temporary labor. During the coffee season I used to come back.

FK: Well how did you feel about having to do all this?

WI: Well I was not very interested in farming.

FK: What it was like, shikata ga nai?

WI: Yes. Just can't help it.

FK: Yeah.

WI: The work was not plentiful.

FK: For recreation, what did you do?

WI: Well those day, there was no facility for recreation, maybe you can play baseball. We didn't have any basketball, no football in school. No track meets, baseball was about the only thing.

FK: When you say baseball, you had a bat and ball and everything?

WI: That's right, then we used to make our own ball by winding the string and making our own ball. Those we used to play with.

FK: What was the center?

WI: We used to put a rubber ball in the center. You know the girls play jacks, the ball, we used to wind it with string.

FK: Wind string around that?

WI: Yeah, make a ball.

FK: Must have been really sore.

WI: Yeah.

(Laughter)

FK: How about your bat?

WI: Well, we were able to buy some bats. In the beginning the carpenters made some bats.

FK: Did you play marbles?

WI: Yeah, we used to play marbles.

FK: Did you folks play peewee?

WI: Yeah, we used to play that too.

(Laughter)

WI: You ever tried to play peewee?

FK: No.

WI: You better try, yeah, that's right, we used to play the marbles and peewee. I used to do a lot of going down to the beach.

FK: Oh.

WI: Go down swimming.

FK: How did you go down?

WI: Walk down.

FK: So what beach was that?

WI: The beach down here, Kainaliu.

FK: Straight down?

WI: Straight down or Kealakekua or we used to walk down to Keauhou Beach, that's five or six miles away. Yeah, we used to walk.

FK: Did you go fishing too?

WI: Yeah, we used to fish when we go down to the beach.

FK: Who did you go with?

WI: Oh, my friends, the kids.

FK: Your parents just let you go?

WI: No, the parents never come.

FK: I mean they allowed you to go?

WI: Oh yeah, whether they allow or not we just go.

(Laughter)

FK: Disappear?

(Laughter)

WI: Yeah, disappear, that's right.

(Laughter)

FK: You said you went to Kainaliu Beach and places like that. What about gates and fences?

WI: Yeah, they have gates because you have to go through the ranch but they were not locked, only closed.

FK: So you can just go through?

WI: Yeah, just go through. If it's locked we climb over.

(Laughter)

FK: Did you go camping often?

WI: Once in awhile.

FK: Was that family?

WI: No, the family never went, never have. Had Boy Scouts yeah.

FK: Oh, you were in the Boy Scouts?

WI: Yeah, I was in the Boy Scouts for a little while.

FK: What school did you go to?

WI: Konawaena School.

FK: And where was that?

WI: Right down here where Mr. Cunningham is living and the library is.

FK: Oh, oh.

WI: That was the Konawaena School and had only five rooms.

FK: Five rooms?

WI: Five rooms, yeah. Five grades, five rooms and seven grades. So they had first grade, second grade, third, fourth, they each have one class in a room. Fifth, sixth, seventh, all in one room. You sat in a different section of the room.

FK: Oh.

WI: You know when I was in the seventh grade, only had four in the seventh grade and the sixth grade, maybe there were seven or ten people.

FK: Oh, is that all?

WI: That's all, the rest, in the room was maybe around twenty in all.

FK: What was the ethnic breakdown--at that time--of the students?

WI: What you mean ethnic?

FK: Ethnic background, you said like sixth grade there were only a few, seventh grade you only had a few people. Were they like mostly Japanese?

WI: Well, we had all kinds of mixture, mostly Japanese. We had some Portuguese, Hawaiians, there were part-Hawaiians, no haole kids as far as I know.

FK: When you first started school, you spoke Japanese then?

WI: Well, that's all I knew. Well, my friends, the boys, there were elder boys than I and they spoke English but I didn't know very much English.

FK: It was mentioned by some other people that even the Hawaiian children went to school speaking Hawaiian and the Portuguese children went to school speaking Portuguese.

WI: Well, they do, yeah.

FK: And it was only in school that they all learned English?

WI: Yeah, that's right.

FK: The communication when you were playing, how was that?

WI: Oh, we got pidgin English, we make up our own words.

(Laughter)

WI: Oh, we got along.

FK: Um, did you have any celebrations like holidays or community . . .

WI: Well, we have 11 June, the Kamehameha Day and the Fourth of July. Those were the main celebrations.

FK: What did you do, Kamehameha Day?

WI: Oh they had horse racing once in a while.

FK: The school?

WI: No, it was a public thing. Then I used to ride the horse, they never had race track, you just run them on the highway, race on the highway.

FK: Whose horse did you race?

WI: Well, some neighbors had a . . . . We didn't have a regular race horse, you know the kind quarter back horse [i.e., quarter horse], only the common horse, you know, we used the pack horses to race. And there was a parade, but not much of a parade.

FK: Was it exciting for you folks though?

WI: Mm, not very much. Never had automobiles, those days. Only animals so it was not too much of a parade.

FK: How about New Year's?

WI: New Year's same thing, no that kind of activity.

FK: Did you folks cook any special foods like that?

WI: Yeah, on New Year's we make special food.

FK: What kind of food did they cook?

WI: Oh, maybe they cook fish in a different manner, prepare meat, chicken those things that were available.

FK: What about mochi like that?

WI: Oh yeah, mochi we used to pound mochi every year. And I like mochi. (Laughter) I like mochi with the azuki. I still like it.

FK: Did you attend Japanese school?

WI: Yeah.

FK: Which Japanese school?

WI: We had two Japanese schools, Hongwanji and there was another private one, Kyōritsu School. So, I went to the Kyōritsu School.

FK: How many years did you attend?

WI: Well, until I finished, six or seven years. Until I finished English school, that's all I had. We used to go in the morning, Japanese school, early in the morning, for one hour and then we go to English school for the rest of the day.

FK: They were close by though?

WI: Konawaena School was right here; Kyōritsu School is where Kona Hospital is; Hongwanji next door now, this Hongwanji is the same place, same location. But we were closer to Kyōritsu School. And my parents hardly went to Hongwanji. My mother used to go once in a while but my friends used to go to Kyōritsu so I went along with them.

FK: Since the money situation was tight, how was your mother able to pay for Japanese school?

WI: Oh, the tuition was very cheap, maybe one dollar a month or a dollar half [\$1.50] a month.

(Laughter)

FK: Per child or is it family or what?

WI: Per head.

FK: Were there any kind of religious holidays that were celebrated, say Japanese style special holidays that you recall?

WI: No, I no can remember but I don't think so. Well, the only thing they used to have Tenchō-setsu and shōgatsu, those are the two main Japanese celebrations.

(Laughter)

FK: Did you have any relatives in Kona?

WI: No.

FK: So you said the Konawaena School only went up to the seventh grade?

WI: Yeah.

FK: So that's all that you could go?

WI: That's right.

FK: Um, what subjects did you like when you were going to school?

WI: What subject, well elementary school, just what they give us. I don't know we had no choice.

FK: Was there anything that you didn't like?

WI: No, no choice, they have their own . . . . So you just follow that.

FK: Do you remember any of your teachers?

WI: The names I remember. Had Miss Barnes, she used to teach fifth, sixth and seventh grade. I know Francis Akana, he was a fourth grade teacher, he was very good but strict. I'll tell you one incident when I was in the fourth grade. We used to sit two people to a desk side by side. And I used to sit with a Hawaiian boy, he was a neighbor. He lived in Kainaliu, the family still lives there.

FK: Oh, who's that?

WI: Ka, you know the Ka family?

FK: Emma Ka?

WI: Emma Ka, their parents, the father was my classmate in the fourth grade. So, during the lessons that we do, you know, we were sent up to the blackboard and the teacher tells you what to write and so forth. Well, this Hawaiian boy his name was Kini so we used to be side by side at the blackboard and it was near the window. Then we saw a dog walking, coming out in the yard, so I asked Kini, "What do you call dog in Hawaiian?"

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WI: Kini said, "'ilio." You know, 'ilio is a dog. The teacher caught us talking so we had to tell him what happened. In those days, the teacher was harsh, you know he called me up to his desk. Then he asked me what we were talking about. I said I asked Kini what the



Hawaiians call the dog and he said "iilio." The teacher said for me to put out my hand. I put my hand out and he gave me whacks, that was the punishment in those days. Anytime we would get the stick, peach wood you know, the stick. He had the peach wood and gave me a spanking on my hand. That wasn't bad, it was painful though and that was the punishment for talking at the blackboard. But the teacher was very good. He's very good in math, he had a good mind and he was good in penmanship. So he used to teach us penmanship on the board and he had good writing. I admired him about it so I still remember that. After he retired, he became a minister. He built his own church, just down in Kailua and he became an ordained pastor. That's a good thing to remember. And Miss Barnes, the other teacher was a harsh teacher too. I never had any spanking from her but many times other students got spankings. She used a rubber hose about this long and she used to give whackings on the back. That was her way of punishing. Those days we had to respect and obey the teacher. The parents didn't complain. Nowadays if the parents hear about that, they will complain but in those days, that was normal.

FK: Did you learn?

WI: Huh?

FK: Did you learn more?

WI: Oh, yeah, and they behaved.

(Laughter)

WI: Sometimes parents do spank their kids but as far as I can remember, I don't remember my father spanking me. He must have been good or I must have been a good boy.

(Laughter)

FK: Did you go to school right through?

WI: Up to the seventh grade, yeah.

FK: But you went continuously?

WI: In those days people who wanted to go to higher school, they must go to Honolulu, so many of them went to Honolulu. They went to the McKinley High School or Normal School. In those days, from elementary you can go right into Normal School. You didn't require a high school education. They used to go for two years and they become licensed teachers. Like one of them I remember is Mrs. Aoki, Yasue Aoki. You know who she is? She's a Normal School graduate, that's the only one I can remember now. My parents were not able to send me to Honolulu although I wanted to go but I couldn't go.

FK: How old were you when you started school?

WI: How old was I when I started school, I was five years old. In Japanese that's six.

(Laughter)

FK: As far as your neighbors were concerned, of the other students you grew up with, did most of them stop at seventh grade also?

WI: Well, all my classmates, they stopped there.

FK: Who was . . .

WI: One of my classmates is still living, Masaru Kuga. Have you interviewed him?

FK: I kind of talked to him.

WI: He's retired and living in Captain Cook, that's my classmate. The other two have gone already, they died.

FK: Like when you had, when you were through with school already, what were your expectations when you became an adult, what did you want to do?

WI: Well, I wanted to do something instead of farming.

FK: Seventh grade you were only what, 13 or 14?

WI: What?

FK: In seventh grade you were only about 13 or 14?

WI: Yeah, 13 years old so one year I stayed home, 14 yeah, I stayed home and helped the farm. When I was 15 there was a labor contractor who used to take contract at the plantation, sugar plantation. Then, he would gather a group of people and take them over there to the plantation. He take a contract on a certain job like hoeing or fluming cane or cutting cane. Then, he get his own group to do the work for him. So I joined them when I was 15 and went to Pahala, the Hawaiian Agriculture Company. That was the first time I went away from home to work.

FK: What did you take with you?

WI: What did I take with me, well, just ordinary clothes, that's all. But I had to come back for the coffee season, to help.

FK: So how long were you there?

WI: Three and one half months, I think.

FK: I think that's the time you were mentioning you went by boat?

WI: That's right, by boat.

FK: You need to tell the story about the boat ride, how, where did you board?

WI: Oh, Napoopoo. From Napoopoo, the inter-island boat. I think the name of the boat was Kilauea. All of us, the whole group went together.

FK: Where did the boat stop?

WI: In Honuapo, that was the landing there, so we all got off at Honuapo. From there we went on the car to Pahala, where we worked.

FK: You mentioned that at the time you went there was rough sea?

WI: The sea was rough. As we approached Kau it became more rough. We stayed in Hoopuloa, in south Kona, this side of Milolii.

FK: And you folks stopped there?

WI: Yeah, there was a landing there so we stayed there for three or four hours. Probably, three hours and then the boat left for Honuapo.

FK: Why did you have to stay there?

WI: There was a landing, it usually stopped there, a regular stop.

FK: Oh with people going off and on?

WI: Yeah and they unload the goods, take in goods, regular shipping point, so we stopped there and then after about 3 o'clock in the morning the boat left for Honuapo. The sea became rough with the wind.

FK: You mentioned before there was cattle on the boat too?

WI: No, not that time.

FK: Oh not that time.

WI: When the boat returns to Honolulu, then they pick up the cattle.

FK: Who was the contractor?

WI: His name was Tokunaga, I don't know his first name but his name was Tokunaga.

FK: Was he from Kona?

WI: Well, he lived in Kona.

FK: How were you paid?

WI: Well, he paid a little better than the plantation did. So, we received \$1.10 a day, working ten hours. When he did well in contract work, he gave us a little bonus.

FK: Oh, really.

WI: If bonus was twenty-five cents a day, instead of \$1.10 we were paid \$1.35 or \$1.40.

FK: How were you paid though?

WI: Paid by the month.

FK: Cash?

WI: With silver or gold, we didn't have any paper money in those days. All in silver and gold. There were ten-dollar gold pieces and five-dollar gold pieces.

FK: That would be a fortune today.

WI: Yeah.

FK: So were you able to save any money?

WI: Yeah, I saved about ten dollars a month.

FK: And what did you do, you just saved it?

WI: We had no bank--I think, people used to leave the money with the plantation office, but I kept my gold pieces. Each month I saved ten dollars and spent the rest. After three months working there, I came back for the coffee season. I brought back the three ten-dollar gold pieces and gave to my parents. And \$30 used to go a long way.

FK: The plantations in Kau, did you have to pay for the housing?

WI: No, they supplied the housing, the plantation supplied the housing.

FK: What about your food and washing clothes?

WI: That was our own, the people that cooked for the group charged so much a month. Oh, I think it was \$18 a month for boarding. The house was free. If you can live for \$18 a month, that's cheap.

(Laughter)

FK: What kind of place did you stay in?

WI: The plantation had their own camp.

FK: Were there other boys there your age too?

WI: No, I was the youngest in the group. The others were all older people.

FK: How was the work, were you able to do it?

WI: The work?

FK: Mm hmm.

WI: I was able to do the work, it wasn't too hard at the plantation. The hoeing or cutting cane, fluming. I never did hāpai kō. That is to bundle the cane and carry to the flume. There was another group that contracted hāpai kō, so I never did do that, that was a little strenuous for me.

(Laughter)

FK: After you finished at Kau, what did you do?

WI: Well, the following year I went down to . . .

FK: That was about 1917, I think?

WI: Yeah, in 1917, I went to McQuaid's home as a yard boy. In those days yard boy was not only working in the yard. Yard boy did housecleaning, help cooking sometimes, milk the cow, feed the cow, sometimes baking. I used to bake a pretty good cake.

(Laughter)

WI: I stayed about three months there and then I had to quit and come back for coffee harvesting. I always had an ambition to become a clerical worker, if I had a chance to work in a bank I would like to work in the bank. We had one bank, Bank of Hawaii in Kona, at that time.

FK: Did your family take their money to the bank?

WI: We didn't have any money in the bank.

FK: How did you know about the bank then?

WI: How did I know the bank? Well, I knew Mr. Ackerman who was the manager at that time. He was the landlord of our coffee farm. We had another bank in Kealahou, the People's Bank which went bankrupt. The green bank building is now occupied by Mrs. Ushiroda as a beauty shop and a haole has a store, that was the original People's Bank. While I was working at McQuaid's home as a yard boy, I bought an old typewriter and I also bought the typing instruction book. In the evenings I practiced typing. And that's the way I started.

FK: Who did you buy the typewriter from?

WI: Oh, I don't know where I got it from but I got it from someplace.

FK: What was your employer doing?

WI: He was a chemist at KD [Kona Development] Company.

FK: Where was his house then, you stayed there?

WI: Yeah, he had a cottage for me, on the side.

FK: Where was this?

WI: Right above Kailua.

FK: What was your salary or your wage?

WI: About \$18 a month, with board and lodging.

FK: You said you stayed there less than a year and so what did you do the next year? What did you do the following year?

WI: The following year I went to work for Suzuki, he was a surveyor, in Kona on the plantation. I worked with him for about half a year.

FK: What did you do?

WI: Help him survey, field work.

FK: And where did you live then?

WI: Well, plantation had a room for me down at the sugar mill.

FK: What was your reason for changing your job?

WI: Reason for changing the job, after each coffee season I had to look for a new job.

FK: Oh, because coffee season you would go home?

WI: Yeah, that's right.

FK: By that time somebody else has your job?

WI: Yeah. (Laughter)

FK: That's why in 1919 you went back home?

WI: That's right.

FK: When you were working for Mr. Suzuki, how much were you being paid?

WI: About \$22 a month.

FK: Oh, that's better then.

WI: That's a little better.

(Laughter)

FK: And even at this time whatever you saved you took home with you?

WI: That's right, I took it home with me for the family.

FK: Why did you go back home after that?

WI: Well, my parents need my help during the coffee season.

FK: You mentioned you stayed for two years after that? Working with the coffee?

WI: Well, I was home, I was offered a position at the Bishop Estate. Then I accepted.

FK: But when you were helping at home on the coffee land you mentioned that you did plantation field work?

WI: Oh yeah, that's right. During off season I went out to work.

FK: Just around here?

WI: Yeah.

FK: Was that all for contract?

WI: No, it was just field work, day work.

FK: So were you paid by the day too, then?

WI: Yeah, paid by the day.

FK: How much?

WI: Started with eighty-five cents a day.

(Laughter)

WI: Then it gradually came up to one dollar a day.

FK: As far as other people working in the fields, did you know many of them? You know people working in the plantation fields?

WI: Oh yeah, there were quite a few.

FK: A lot of people your age? Were there boys your age?

WI: There were some people of my age.

FK: When you were working in the Kainaliu area then, were you living at home?

WI: That's right.

FK: What about your brothers and sisters, were they still going to school or were they working and helping too?

WI: Well, my brother, when he became high school age, I sent him to Mid-Pacific Institute in Honolulu. I wasn't able to go but when I was working, I saved enough money to send him. Because in those days, the tuition at Mid-Pacific Institute for nine months was only \$120, they give him board and room for only \$120. So, every month I used to send \$10, sometimes I paid \$60 in advance--I borrow \$60 and pay back this side. So he stayed there, he was there for two years and after two years he went to the Mainland. He went to the Mainland and he worked his way through high school. He didn't have enough money to come back and I didn't have enough money to go over so we were separated there, communication was writing once in a while.

FK: So in 1921 you said you were offered a job for Bishop Estate and who were you working for then?

WI: Huh?

FK: Who was your boss then?

WI: Uh, Mr. Tommy White, he was the agent for Bishop Estate.

FK: Where was this?

WI: The office was opposite Ushijima Store. He had a separate office there.

FK: You mentioned that somebody else was working there and he wanted to quit so you got the job?

WI: Mr. Hirano who was working with Mr. White decided to move to Hilo. Before he left, Mr. Hirano asked me whether I wanted his job as I was interested in clerical work. So he introduced me to Tommy White. I didn't know him but probably he knew me.

FK: What kind of work did you do there?

WI: Clerical work and go out to do some collection, field work, I didn't stay in the office all day.



FK: What did you use for transportation?

WI: For going out?

FK: Yeah.

WI: I didn't have any car so I just walked over to the office in the morning. He had a car to go out, so he supplied the car when I went out.

FK: So how did you learn?

WI: Well, I learned to drive from my friend. He was in a taxi business. In 1921, I learned to drive. But I didn't have a car of my own.

FK: Who was your friend that was a taxi driver?

WI: Huh?

FK: The one who had the taxi?

WI: You mean his name, he was Ishikawa, he's still living. You know him, Ishikawa?

Ishikawa, he's in Hilo, his family all moved out from Kona.

FK: So, Mr. White, what kind of work was he doing then?

WI: He was a rancher, he raised cattle, he had his own ranch. His side business was Bishop Estate agent. He also leased from Bishop Estate quite a tract of land in Keauhou and Kahaluu area and he sub-leased those to Japanese tenants, Japanese farmers and he made some money by sub-leasing to them.

FK: You also mentioned that Roy Wall worked on the ranch too?

WI: Yeah, Roy Wall was Mr. White's nephew and he raised him and he used to work on the ranch also.

FK: What was your salary?

WI: My salary was \$60 a month, better than \$1.00 a day.

FK: You mentioned that you also worked on the ranch?

WI: Well, during my spare time Tommy White used to take me out on the ranch, his ranch.

FK: What kind of work did you do?

WI: Regular cowboy job, ride on horseback, round up cattle, I liked it, I used to like horseback riding and so I enjoyed that.

FK: You mean you used their horses that they had on the ranch, you used their horses to work with?

WI: Yeah.

FK: Were you paid separately for that?

WI: No, that was on Bishop's time.

(Laughter)

WI: Bishop Estate wasn't so busy everyday so during slack time he used to take me out on the ranch. I enjoyed that.

FK: When you went around collecting for Bishop Estate, did you notice, as far as the people who had leases, were they mostly Japanese?

WI: Yeah, mostly Japanese, I knew everybody.

FK: Were there like Chinese or Koreans like that? Were there other ethnic groups too? People of other ethnic groups?

WI: There were some Hawaiians, Filipinos, few Filipinos.

FK: Oh, there were a few Filipinos that had leases too?

WI: Yeah.

FK: Did everyone pay you in cash or how were the transactions done?

WI: You mean the Bishop Estate tenants?

FK: Yeah.

WI: They had to pay rent for the lease, usually when they sold the coffee they paid.

FK: So what did you collect then?

WI: What's your question?

FK: If they paid by the crop, what did you collect?

WI: When they sell their coffee then they paid.

FK: Did they pay you cash?

WI: Yeah, they paid cash. But some of them don't pay regularly, they were delinquent, those were the people I had to go after. (But we usually gave them more time. We didn't repossess any lease, but there were cases of people who just abandoned their properties and went away.)

FK: How long were you with Thomas White then?

WI: I was there about two years and then the Bishop Bank opened a branch in Kona, which is now the First Hawaiian Bank. Originally it was the Bank of Bishop and Company. They opened a branch so the Bishop Estate asked the bank to handle the agency instead of Tommy White. So, Tommy White lost his job as the agent then I went to the bank as a clerk. I went together with the agency and then I became a banker.

(Laughter)

FK: So, how did your duties change or were they the same? When you went into Bishop Bank.

WI: Well, I did the banking, I used to do the banking and the collecting part was the same, no change. (I used to go out for collections, attended to leases [new leases] and also talked to people about saving money.)

FK: (What forms of credit did the bank allow or recognize for loans?)

WI: (Co-makers, property and sometimes on trust.)

FK: (International transactions?)

WI: (No. Those days, I think people who went to Japan took American cash or we would refer them to the Honolulu office.)

FK: What kind of staff did you have?

WI: I had only one manager and I was the clerk. Only two in the bank to start with. (And we didn't have equipment like nowadays, but we had adding machine and typewriter. Our banking hours were 8:00 to 3:30 but we opened until about 4 o'clock.)

FK: Where was the location?

WI: Right here, the same building the People's Bank occupied. It was vacant for about one year before the First Hawaiian Bank came in.

FK: You said the first manager didn't stay very long?

WI: Yeah.

FK: You remember his name?

WI: Well his name was Muirhead. I forgot his first name but he stayed only one year and he found the country was too lonesome as he was not married. So, he went back to the head office in Honolulu. Then Mr. Cushingham came up as the manager although he was single also. I think he liked the country life so he stayed until he retired.

- FK: So as far as Bishop Estate was concerned, how extensive was the land . . .
- WI: Bishop Estate owns land in Keauhou, Kahaluu, Kahauloa, Keei, Honaunau, Kealia and part of Hookena.
- FK: So those were all the places that you had to go?
- WI: That's right. (Later, about 1960s I think they sold some lands in sections of Kahaluu and Keei.)
- FK: Were all of the people coffee farmers or were they doing other things?
- WI: Well most of them were coffee farmers.
- FK: What other kinds of things were they doing, what other kind of work were they doing?
- WI: Besides farming?
- FK: Were they ranchers?
- WI: No, the coffee farmers were all raising coffee. A few tenants raised taro.
- FK: I mean the Bishop Estate lessees.
- WI: Yeah, some ranchers were there.
- FK: As far as the lease was concerned, how many years, how was that determined?
- WI: Five, 10, 15 to 20 years.
- FK: That was just a policy that was set?
- WI: Yeah, about 20 years at the most.
- FK: How was it decided who would get the land, who would be able to lease the land?
- WI: Well, they originally applied for a vacant lot, but the tenants were allowed to sell if they want to move away.
- FK: Did they have to come to the bank and apply for the land?
- WI: Yeah, that's right.
- FK: Were they able to know which land was up for lease, was it advertised or did you just tell them where the land was?
- WI: Oh well, they find out from their friends or they live nearby. The office had maps to show which lands are available for lease.

FK: Some of the land, did they have to clear it themselves or was it undeveloped land also that they had for leasing?

WI: Right, undeveloped land.

FK: What was your salary at Bishop Bank?

WI: Oh, I started with \$70 a month.

FK: You said you stayed there only two years, what made you leave?

WI: (Well, opportunity for promotion was very poor; no position to be promoted to--only two of us. The highest title I could get was as assistant cashier.)

Why did I leave? Well, the main purpose was I wanted to do something myself and I had a chance to buy a store. I was not able to buy by myself but I had my friend as a partner so we both bought the store. We advanced to the employees of the sugar plantation, Kona Development Company. Within two years, the later part of the second year, the plantation bankrupt. We used to advance to the plantation laborers, on monthly payment basis. When they received their pay, they paid us. But before the plantation went bankrupt, the laborers were not paid for three months, so we had to wait for the payment for three months. Then the plantation went bankrupt and it was really hard on us. We collected some of the money but then some of them couldn't pay the whole thing.

FK: Who did you open the store with?

WI: A man named Kanehiro. (He later continued the store alone.)

FK: Did some of the workers, because they were out of jobs leave Kona?

WI: Oh some left, yeah.

FK: So then you weren't paid too?

WI: That's right.

FK: So what did you do?

WI: Well, I was still running the business but I thought it was not the right thing for me to do. So I went to apply again for the job in the bank. It just happened that the employee was leaving for a job with the Department of Education. Therefore I went back in his place. I was just lucky to be there.

FK: When you went back to the bank in 1926 you said you were taking a correspondence course?

WI: Yeah.

FK: You were taking courses since 1921, high school courses?

WI: Yeah, I took high school courses but I never completed. Correspondence course was very hard without any help therefore I was not able to get any help, see. So that's one reason why I never completed. After I went into the bank, and then I took a banking course, that was a short course. I finished it in about one year.

FK: You said that was a LaSalle?

WI: No, the banking course was a separate correspondence school. But after that I took higher accounting from the LaSalle Extension University while I was in the bank. I finished it in two years so it was all right.

FK: Then you were kept pretty busy, you were studying and working?

WI: Yeah.

(Laughter)

FK: How long were you there at the bank then?

WI: I was there for five years.

FK: So then in the meantime you got married?

WI: Yeah.

FK: Can you tell me about that? Can you talk about that a little?

WI: Well, I thought I better settle down. Well, while I was running the store, my wife's father was the head luna at the plantation. His friend was a plantation employee. They lived in the same camp right in Kainaliu. My wife was still attending Konawaena High School. She was in the junior year. But, my father-in-law's friend was our store customer so I knew him also. Well, someday I said I have to get married and he was telling me that he's recommending my present wife, and he talked to her father that he think it's a good idea that his daughter get married. Maybe my character appealed to them. My father-in-law knew me so that's the way it started but I told my father-in-law's friend don't mention anything to the girl. As I don't know her very well and she was still attending school. But, before long they spoke to her and, well, I don't know how they approached her but anyway that's the way it started and then my father-in-law was agreeable and thought that I was a good enough fellow.

(Laughter)

WI: So, that's how it started and then I thought I better go and see her . . .

END OF SIDE TWO

SIDE ONE, TAPE NO. 9-73-1-81

WI: Well, I was married in 1928, my wife was in her junior year but she quit the school, she didn't finish her high school. So, well, we got married. (Laughs)

FK: Where were you married?

WI: Married right here at the Central Kona Union Church.

FK: How was, did you follow any kind of Japanese tradition, though, as far as reception or..

WI: Well we had a wedding party, yeah. That's all.

FK: Did she wear a kimono?

WI: No, no, ordinary American wedding gown. No, we didn't have a Japanese wedding ceremony.

FK: Where did you live after that?

WI: After we got married?

FK: Uh huh.

WI: Well, at that time, the plantation failed, so my father-in-law bought a coffee land and he became a coffee farmer--bought the land above, right about, you know where Dr. Boone's office was? Let me see, I don't know what you call, right in Kainaliu.

You know where the Uchimuras live, up there. Also, Matsuokas live, you know, Yamagata's nearby. So he had the coffee field there, and he was a farmer. So after they moved to the farm house and then we moved to the plantation house where he was living. So we lived in Kainaliu, in that house.

FK: What was your father-in-law's name?

WI: He was Kenjiro Tatsuno. (And, my wife's name is Masae.)

FK: At this time, was there a great change in Kainaliu, would you say?

WI: What's that?

FK: About 1928, when you were married had Kainaliu changed much from the time when you were young?

WI: Well, one thing the plantation camp buildings are all gone now. The building that I lived in, the plantation head luna house is still there but with some alteration, it's in the back of that Kurohara Store.



FK: How about along the highway, are there any changes?

WI: (Highway was widened to 60 feet, paved, and all the old store buildings were rebuilt or rennovated to modern standards and new business buildings came up.)

FK: There were more buildings?

WI: Nozaki's old building is still there, but it is renovated; and the Christian Resources store is an old building but it has been renovated also.

FK: Oh, that's an old building?

WI: Yeah.

FK: What was that before?

WI: That was an old small store operated by some other people during the plantation days. That's about all, the other buildings have changed or been re-built. (And new ones were built.)

FK: Where we see a lot of new homes, was that mostly coffee land, too?

WI: The coffee lands are about the same as of that time. There's no new coffee land came up, in fact, some of the coffee lands are improved now.

FK: You worked until 1932. By 1932, were only you and Mr. Cushingam working at the bank?

WI: Yeah, yeah, oh yeah.

FK: So why did you quit the bank?

WI: Well, I wanted to get into something of my own and for one year I tried to market coffee for the farmers direct to the Mainland--Mainland broker. But the farmers did not carry out their promise. The coffee price started to rise after I started and then other buyers started offering better prices than my selling direct to the Mainland for them. The farmers never kept up their promise and they start to sell the coffee away to some other people offering the higher price.

FK: So they had said they would sell to you?

WI: Yeah, as the farmers did not keep their promise, I started to buy coffee also, but I didn't make money and no future in that kind of business so I quit after one year. Then I started my public accounting business.

FK: Did you have an office?



WI: I used to work from my home.

FK: How long did you do this public accounting?

WI: Well, I'm still doing. I kept on doing work and then I did some side work while I was doing that--the first in accounting business and then since I have experience in banking and handling people's money, I was always interested in doing some of that type of work. (American Savings & Loan Association had their branch office in Hilo. They approached me to sell their Installment Savings Plan on a commission basis. As they paid higher interest than the bank, I accepted their proposition on commission basis and sold their Savings Plan. This was my part-time job. After doing this for a year, Mr. Hirata, President of Kona Community Federal Credit Union, approached me to operate and manage their organization. As I was interested in handling money with my eight years of banking experience, I knew the people in Kona and also my reputation in Kona was good, I had the confidence of building up Kona Community Federal Credit Union. I accepted their proposal with their promise that I may engage in my accounting service as my private business. They also promised that my compensation will be raised according to the growth of the Credit Union.)

FK: On your own?

WI: On my own, see, credit union at that time was very small and . . .

FK: Where was it located?

WI: It was in front of Manago Hotel, they had an office there but it opened only part-time.

FK: But did you go down there?

WI: Yeah, I went there. Originally they opened two days a week and each day being about half day. But since I took over I solicit accounts and educated the people, the credit union way of saving money and helping each other. (Part of the time I used to go out during night and late in the afternoon.) It started to grow and we start to open full day. Then we need an assistant so we hired a full-time assistant, and we stayed there. (We opened every day thereafter.)

FK: Who was that?

WI: (Yasunori Deguchi. He is still working with the credit union.) So that's the way I did and built up the credit union. (After we moved out here, he started to work full time.)

FK: When you started, what was the biggest asset at that time?

WI: Well, the asset was around \$20,000 when I accepted the job.

FK: How long had they been working as a credit union?

WI: I think credit union was originally started in 1936 [October 26], somewhere around there, but originally it was [Kona] Farmer's [Federal] Credit Union. Only farmers can become members but we had a councilman, we used to call supervisor at the time, by the name of Julian Yates. He was interested in credit union movement so he wanted to change the name so that anyone in the community can become a member and he changed the name to Kona Community Federal Credit Union and obtained a new charter. After that, any resident in Kona was eligible to become a member.

FK: When did it become a community credit union?

WI: I think it was 1939 [June 26]. Still the credit union didn't grow so well so that's when they approached me.

FK: Do you think the growth was contributed by perhaps more cash flowing?

WI: Well, as you know, the Kona district is mostly farmers, therefore, if the farm crops were good, we had more cashflow for them. But if the price wasn't good then we'll have a depression. So there were good years and there were bad years also, but the credit union kept on growing and as the capital grew, we were able to help more people.

FK: How did they have to move here?

WI: Well we wanted to have a centralized and an ideal place, in order to grow. I told the directors it should be near the bank so that's how we moved to Kealahou from Manago's location, it's more centralized now.

FK: So what about the land and the property then?

WI: (We rented the office building from Kishi. Kishi had a store on the land he had leased. Later, Kishi bought the land from his landlord and sub-divided it. Then, the credit union bought a lot from Kishi and built the present credit union.)

FK: You're talking about where the new credit union is now?

WI: (Actually on the site of my present office was an old building which the credit union occupied as their office.)

FK: Right now where the Finance Factor . . .

WI: Yeah, Finance Factors is leasing a portion of my building, the site on which the old credit union office stood. Then credit union built a new building on the lot they bought from Kishi.

FK: How was it that--the credit union advertises the high interest that they pay?

- WI: Oh, on savings account they were paying better interest than the bank. So that's one reason why the people patronized the credit union, too. And then I was interested in that plan, have the people earn more money for their savings.
- FK: Like when you went around to collect from people and get them to save, in the beginning how much would an average deposit be?
- WI: Oh, they can start from anything.
- FK: I mean, before, they didn't have too much money, about how much would an average family pay?
- WI: It's hard to say, it depends on each person. As you know, there are thrifty people, they have saved money in the banks or they rather have money in the bank.
- FK: Like was it \$5 to \$20 or \$100?
- WI: Well some of them brought in thousands of dollars.
- FK: Oh really?
- WI: Yeah, I tell you one instance, when Deguchi was there, in the office opposite Manago Hotel, when our office was there. One of the farmers by the name of Tsukahara, he's still living, came with \$3,000 cash in paper money, currency. I wasn't there but Deguchi was there and received it. It was Deguchi's first experience to see big money like that in currency. He said he was somewhat scared, but he accepted the money, \$3,000. I was very happy. I knew Tsukahara well and built his confidence in credit union, so he went to the bank and he brought the money.
- FK: Oh, from the bank.
- WI: But credit union started even \$5 at least, then \$10, or \$100 or any amount. But the interest is figured by share, they call \$5 a share so they figure interest on every \$5 so every dollar doesn't work in credit union. It must be in multiples of \$5, see, so if you have \$1,000 that means that's 200 shares right there, so they figure on the share, that's why they call it dividends but the Internal Revenue doesn't recognize dividends, they say all credit union gives interest so you report in your tax return as interest, not on the dividend. But it's interesting, I'm interested in credit union. It's good, they're doing a good job.
- FK: I was told by some of the early people who worked at the credit union that they would even collect like fifty cents or a dollar from people from the very beginning because it was depression times.
- WI: Fifty cents or a dollar?

- FK: Or a dollar, you know, just for savings.
- WI: Oh, once they start, they can deposit any amount. They can start with one dollar if they want to but . . .
- FK: But it's an indication as to how hard times were.
- WI: Yeah, but I never encouraged people to start with a dollar, always at least five dollars I tell them to start with. But they can add on one dollar or fifty cents, that's all right. It's okay.
- FK: How do you feel about the credit union as far as having helped the farmers?
- WI: Oh, yeah, it helped the famers. While I was there I helped many people buy land. You know, we used to make loans so they can buy land.
- FK: Well, there were other like banks available but would you say that the credit union did a better job or was it about the same?
- WI: Well, it was easier than the bank, the bank was very strict, they make loans but the credit union don't make big mortgage loans like the bank do. When you come to big money, well, they have to go to bank, but credit union does not have that much money on hand to lend anyway, in the first place. We used to lend small amount but as it grew, well, we were able to make larger loans. Sometimes they need some down payment or something to buy land, in the case like that or short term we do accommodate. But, if we knew the people well we just loaned them, no security, they need \$1,000 we just loaned them; I used to do that, that's the way . . .
- FK: But it was on faith.
- WI: Oh yeah, that's what I did. As long as they are in the district, if cannot pay in one year or half year we used to renew. We gave them the credit, we helped them.
- FK: So you think this was a factor in the growth of the credit union?
- WI: Yeah, mm hmm.
- FK: Why did credit union open a branch in Kailua?
- WI: Because they want to accommodate the people down in Kailua.
- FK: They're not farmers down there, but it's a real community . . .
- WI: That's why, see, it's not the farmer's credit union, it's a community credit union now, see. So anybody in the community can become a member and Kailua is growing so a branch was opened there. I think they're doing good over there, I don't know.

FK: So how long were you with the credit union?

WI: Fifteen years.

FK: When you first started though, what was the interest rate?

WI: Oh, at that time I think was about . . .

FK: This was on savings, yeah?

WI: It was better than the bank, we paid better than the bank; I think, about 2½ percent, I don't quite remember. But when depression came it came down to, the bank came down to 1 percent. Then we were paying 1½ percent.

FK: That was during the depression?

WI: Yeah.

FK: Even though the credit union was struggling along. So when you left after 15 years, just about 1955 or 1956, yeah?

WI: Yeah.

FK: How were the assets of the credit union then?

WI: About \$30 million.

FK: That's quite a bit.

WI: Oh yeah. (Equal about \$30 million.)

FK: So after you left credit union what did you do?

WI: I went to, I wanted to get some other institution that can pay better than the credit union. Finance Factors, it's a new company but it was about two years old at that time, but they were advertising. Their stockholders seemed to be good people so I approached them through Sakakihara. He and Hiram Fong, they were very good friends, both legislators at the time in the [Hawaii] State Legislature so I went and asked Sakakihara to talk to Hiram Fong. Hiram Fong was the president of Finance Factors at that time so he talked to them and I tried to interest them to, you know, open a branch in Kona. So that's how I brought Finance Factors in Kona.

FK: So in April, you said around April, 1956, then you talked to Finance Factors?

WI: Yeah.

FK: Then when you first worked there was no salary?

WI: No, well, I was on the salary but with the understanding that as it grows then compensation will grow, they were able to.

FK: The present building you said opened in 1956?

WI: That was built in 1956.

FK: That's when you moved your office down there?

WI: That's right.

FK: And how is it now?

WI: Oh, very good, very prosperous, very good. I can tell you that we have 23 branches in the whole state. With the head office, other than the head office, we have 22 branches. The Kona branch is the biggest.

FK: Oh really?

WI: We're doing that good. And I'm happy with the results, happy with people.

FK: Do you presently still go fishing and things like that? You said you used to like to go to the beach, do you still go?

WI: No, I don't go to the beach anymore.

FK: So what is your pastime?

WI: Well, I spend my time with golf. And then the beaches now is not, as you know, like the olden days. The olden days you can just walk down to any place you want to. But now all this is private owners and you have to go through the private owner's property.

FK: You mentioned that your parents returned to Japan?

WI: Yeah.

FK: What happened to the coffee land?

WI: We sold the coffee land and then they went.

FK: So after that you were no longer farming coffee?

WI: No.

FK: So since 1919 then you were not farming?

WI: No, after that time no farming.

FK: In those days, did you have kumiai?



WI: Oh yes, we had kumiai.

FK: From the time you were, moved to Kona?

WI: Oh yeah, that's right.

FK: How did it function then?

WI: Oh, I think did very well.

FK: What were some of the things that the kumiai?

WI: Well, the kumiai used to, like farming. If a person wanted to build up a home in the farm or build up a warehouse or something, you know, instead of hiring a contractor--they didn't have so many contractors either like nowadays, they had carpenters but no contractors--what they did is that they hired one carpenter and the rest, all the helpers, the kumiai people went and help. I think that is a very wonderful thing. And like when they have wedding, the kumiai people will go and help the party. In those days the party lasts for three days, at least, you know. The day before, they have to go and prepare for the feast, some started a couple days ahead for the wedding day. Then come the wedding day, you know, the party, okay, and after the party all the helper people they came back to clean up. After clean-up they had their own party by themselves.

FK: Oh, just the people who helped?

WI: Yeah, only the those that helped, they had a party by themselves. And then another day--maybe they borrowed lots of utensils or cooking material things. So they have to clean up and return them. That's another day. In those days the time was not valuable like now. You work all day and you only get one dollar, you know. Nowadays, time is valuable. You cannot spend all day, you know that's big difference but kumiai spirit, I think is wonderful, yeah.

FK: Well we know until today, like funeral, they . . .

WI: Yeah, for instance, if a person get ill, get hospitalized, all right, and the farm needs help, kumiai people go and help, you know, to . . .

FK: Oh, they take turns or something?

WI: Yeah, they take turns.

FK: Since you were living around here what was the kumiai, oh that side . . .

WI: Yeah, we call it Kainaliu kumiai.

FK: Did you have dues to pay?

WI: No, I don't think so, I don't remember.

FK: How about tanomoshi[-kō]?

WI: Oh yes, there were lots of tanomoshi[-kō].

FK: Was that within the kumiai?

WI: I don't know, it's hardly in the kumiai, in the kumiai they cannot get enough members because kumiai used to be about 15 to 20 [member families] at the most.

FK: Families?

WI: Yeah, 20 families at the most. They were separated. The closest people live in one particular locality maybe 10 to 15, maybe 20, and then to build a tanomoshi[-kō] the members must pay dues. In \$10 tanomoshi[-kō] they get 20 people to raise \$200. You know how it operates, tanomoshi[-kō]? They bid for the money, every month. If you bid one dollar for the money, okay, then that one dollar is paid to each of the remaining members. The people who drew the money does not bid anymore; that's all, pau, but they don't get any more interest, but keep on paying \$10 every month until the end. Following month if one of the remaining members bids \$1.10, he pays \$1.10 to each of the remaining members. That's why the tanomoshi[-kō] members who have money make more money because he don't bid high and keep receiving interest every month.

FK: What if you don't need the money and you just leave it to the last?

WI: (Yeah, people that do not need money do not bid and wait to the last or near the end of the tanomoshi[-kō] so that he can bid low, probably only fifty cents when the bidding comes down.) But come down but the period is short already, but some people bid high already because they only, for a short period and the remaining members, for instance there are 20 members, you finish high, you draw, you bid for the money and you only pay back for 10 people.

FK: Oh, so for all those people who took early, they don't get any . . .

WI: No, when they draw, they are pau, they don't get any more interest but they have to contribute every month to the end.

FK: Yeah, they have to pay their share.

WI: Yeah, they have to sign a note and then usually a friend would endorse, see that the money will be paid back. But some people fail, you know. They have cases that some members cannot pay who failed the payment. In that case the endorser must put up.



FK: Oh, really?

WI: No, that's how it goes. But they all, some business people start a \$500 tanomoshi[-kō]. To raise \$500, instead of making \$10, \$10, \$10, they start with \$25 tanomoshi[-kō], you see? Each member put in \$25 for 20 months. See, the one that organize, that start the tanomoshi[-kō], gets the whole \$500 with no interest. He doesn't pay any interest and he doesn't bid. For instance, if I need the money then all the members, pay their first payment and to make \$500 and I can use the \$500 myself but usually I have to serve refreshment, see, members come, you know. They call that oya, they call oya, the starter. Every month they meet at the oya.

FK: Oh, you have to have refreshments, too?

WI: Oh yeah, yeah.

FK: It's a party every time?

WI: Oh yeah, yeah, it's a regular party time. You start the tanomoshi[-kō] and all kind people come, you know, good song, sake and all that. And every month they meet, bid for the money and have refreshments.

FK: Men, you have women there too?

WI: Oh yeah, women come too sometimes. The women have their own woman tanomoshi[-kō], the fujin-kai, they used to have otera no fujin-kai. I don't know now but they used to have. But women come for social gathering, because it's small, maybe five dollars a month but the principle is same which is very good way to raise money for the needy one because you go to the bank and you cannot get money. There's no credit union. When credit union started tanomoshi[-kō] start to die down because credit union way of getting money is easier. But tanomoshi[-kō] is . . .

FK: You don't have to wait your turn, yeah? (Laughs)

WI: Yeah, that's right.

FK: So in the beginning you think tanomoshi[-kō] was a big help then?

WI: Oh was big help. So when you need the money you need it badly, you must have it and you ask your friends to start one tanomoshi[-kō], to help you. And your friends help you, too.

FK: Were people participating in more than one tanomoshi[-kō]?

WI: Some of them get. If I have plenty money I may join in two or three tanomoshi[-kō], you know, then the interest in one month come quite a bit, you know, because it's a monthly affair. But that's illegal.

FK: Illegal?

WI: Illegal, it's not legal. (Laughs) Tanomoshi[-kō] is illegal, there's no law to control.

FK: How about the kumiai that you're a member of presently? What is this now?

WI: What you're saying?

FK: Before we were talking about the Kainaliu [Kumiai], but you changed, what is this kumiai?

WI: Right here is Bank Kumiai, well, I'm member of the Bank Kumi.

FK: Is it because you moved that you changed?

WI: Yeah, some people still remains, they don't change the membership. If I'm a Kainaliu, I used to be in Kainaliu Kumi but I moved up here and it's more convenient for us to join the kumi where you live so I resigned the kumi from Kainaliu and came over here. But some people that moved to Captain Cook are still member over here, see. Anything happen in this kumi, well, they have to come this far. (Laughs) And something happen there we have to go over. So it's not very good thing when come to that occasion.

FK: So how long have you been a member of the Bank Kumi?

WI: Well, since we moved over here so it's over 30 years.

FK: So how's the membership, has it changed?

WI: Oh, yeah, it was ten but now a little over 30. All this subdivision here, they all became members here so we over 30.

FK: So I guess before, you knew people better?

WI: Oh yeah, now when we moved here we don't associate with very much. There's too many to associate with 30 families. We have picnic once a year so we meet with the picnic come, practical.

FK: Oh, that's when you say, "Oh, are we in the same kumi?"

WI: Yeah, yeah.

FK: Can you tell me about your house over here? You had a story about your house?

WI: This house?

FK: Uh huh.

WI: As I mentioned to you, originally it was a huge house and it was pretty run-down and need repairing.

- FK: When you say large, you mean lots of room?
- WI: Oh yes. The length was about 60 feet long and they had about, I think, about five rooms. I don't need that much and I cannot repair that much, you know, spend money.
- FK: Well, it still looks pretty big.
- WI: It's big enough for us. That's why I demolished the whole building and reused all available material. This house I think was already built in 1904 or 1905, the original building.
- FK: Who was the owner then, or who lived here?
- WI: The pastor of the church was living here.
- FK: Oh, the Central Union . . .
- WI: Yeah, the Central (Kona) Union Church, the pastor was living here so then I demolished and whatever salvageable, you know, so it's about 70 percent of the old material is here.
- FK: You mentioned all the windows are the original.
- WI: Yeah, all the windows, the French windows are all from the old building. My ceiling is all wood, T & G [tongue-and-groove].
- FK: Oh yeah, like the wall.
- WI: It's old material, it's thick, inch and a quarter T & G [tongue-and-groove]. So, it's you can actually run around on it and it doesn't sag.
- FK: How about the, you said, why did they sell the house and the property?
- WI: Well, Hawaiian Evangelical Association had a large property that they were not using and other people trying to ask for them, so they decided to subdivide and sell, you know, sub-let. So, Cushingham bought one place, two-and-a-half acres there. But his plan changed then Hongwanji's graveyard start to get filled up, and they needed more space so they asked Cushingham to sell the place, so, Cushingham sold the place to Hongwanji. So now they can extend the graveyard. But, now many people start to cremate, so, they don't need the big space. Therefore they planted some nut trees in there. Eventually they'll be picking up nuts just like I do mine. You have a little coffee, too, at your place.
- FK: Yes. . . . You said the bank was also on the property? The bank's here, First Hawaiian Bank?
- WI: Yeah, that was part of this property, they bought it. Cushingham bought his place first and then the bank bought that place. This place with the old building was not occupied. At that time Hawaiian Evangelical Association didn't need it, so, I approached them to

sell it to me. Being a member of the church, I had a chance to buy it.

FK: Oh, it's convenient for you.

WI: Oh yes, I was happy to have bought this.

FK: You said 30 years--when did you purchase the property here?

WI: 1946.

FK: Were you a member of the Central Union at that time, too?

WI: Yeah, I was.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

FK: How long have you been a member of the church then?

WI: Well I used to attend Sunday School here but actually became church member in 1919.

FK: Oh, after your parents left?

WI: Yeah, regular member, yeah, 1919.

FK: (Can you tell me a little about Central Kona Young Men's Association? I understand it was a non-political and non-religious organization.)

WI: (Yes. They had a clubhouse on a lease land below the Kona Hospital. Now that lot is occupied by Tokunaga and. . .several people. This organization ws for the Central Kona people and did a lot for Kona. . .maybe around 30 active people. I wasn't too active. It probably ended about when the war [World War II] started.)

FK: (How did the World War II affect you?)

WI: (They were rather strict, you know. You know the boundary--North and South Kona--where Ushiroda station is. Even crossing the boundary we need permit to go. You can talk over the boundary but to cross you need permit to go. Then we [of Japanese descent] were not able to get together more than three people. So naturally an association like this [Central Kona Young Men's Association] cannot meet. Even at funeral people cannot group together. Even speaking Japanese--if a policeman's around we never spoke in Japanese.)

FK: (What about church?)

WI: (We could attend church except people needed permit to cross the boundaries.)

FK: (But your church was not attended only by Japanese.)

WI: (Yeah. So we allowed to go to church. But for funeral--when they have to cook at home people allowed to go but needed permit. Maybe Christians had a little advantage because members were mixed group. Christian ministers were not interned.)

(Laughter)

WI: (However, some ardent Christian members were interned. You know, Mr. Okamura, the old man, he's gone now; he used to do transactions for the Japanese with the [Japanese] consul. That's why those kind people were interned. He was an American citizen.)

FK: (Were you allowed to go to the beach?)

WI: (Yeah . . . . We used to go down to the beach. But we couldn't cross the boundary--(laughs) only on our side. They [some people] were not kind. No, they were not kind. Those we knew and grew up with--some were okay, but many things--business transactions they were somewhat strict. Like buying of property they never sold to us, to the Japanese. In my case, in Kainaliu where we lived, we had verbal agreement with the landlord that when the lease expire they would sell to us, but during the war--when the war started their mind was changed and they sold to the Chinese.)

FK: (Then after the war did things get better?)

WI: (Yeah, it did.)

FK: You worked on the coffee land and on plantations?

WI: Yeah.

FK: So which do you prefer or which do you think is easier?

WI: Coffee is easier.

FK: And why is that?

WI: Well, maybe one reason is I was brought up on a coffee farm so I'm used to coffee farming. I'm not used to plantation except the time that I just worked on. If you own a coffee farm, you're independent, you own the coffee field yourself, you're your own boss. Well, in plantation, you are hired by the plantation company so you cannot do whatever you like to do. In my own coffee farm, I am free to do whatever I want to do.

FK: So as far as being free to do what you want to do then you think the coffee land is better?

WI: Yeah.

- FK: Well, you said you didn't want to be a farmer, what would you say were things that you didn't feel were, well, not too good kind of things? What were not too good things about being a coffee farmer?
- WI: (Well, I was on a leased coffee farm. There is no security farming on a leased property. And I was not able to buy property. Therefore, I was not interested in farming.)
- FK: Oh, just lease?
- WI: Yeah. For that reason I have encouraged many people who are living on leasehold to buy the land if available because when the lease expire all the improvement you put in there is not yours anymore. In the early days before their lease expired many farmers bought the lease back for another term, for 10 or 15 years because you don't want to lose what you put in. Those are the things that are not good. So, if you own your own property, you have stability and farming becomes more enjoyable. Like the people in Keei area, they have large leasehold. Though they're on the Bishop Estate land, they are good landlords. You can rely on their lease, they will renew your lease, but the rent will be raised. Therefore, you're stable, more or less, on the Bishop Estate land.
- FK: Oh, even if they build a new house or something?
- WI: Yeah, you know, if you have a long lease, you could build a better home, live in a better condition.
- FK: Anything else about the coffee farming that wasn't good?
- WI: Well, those are the things that I was interested in.
- FK: What about the prices like that? Coffee price?
- WI: Coffee price was fluctuating, up and down.
- FK: Because the price rises and falls, do you think that would be a factor in not wanting to become a farmer also?
- WI: No, I don't think so, not in my case.
- FK: Why do you think coffee has continued so long in Kona?
- WI: Well, if they live in Kona, other than farming, there's no job available at that time. If you have a farm, your livelihood was more or less guaranteed because, you know, like in my days you can get your provisions for one year credit from a store. You make a good living until you harvest your crop. Then when the crop comes you give the crop to them. If the price is low, maybe you cannot meet your obligation, in that case, they can extend, see? And they can carry on for another year. And in the meantime the price may come up and eventually you have your obligation all paid.



FK: Sounds like a gamble. (Laughs)

WI: Well, that's no assurance, though. That's why the young people never stayed in Kona. They all go away, Honolulu, Mainland.

FK: Well how do you feel about coffee and it's impact on Kona, with people, you know, through financial dealings?

WI: With the present price I think they make good now, well-to-do living. But only thing you have to do your work yourself. You cannot depend on labor because the labor is too high. Therefore, you cannot cultivate big area.

FK: So then you're limited again?

WI: If you plant macadamia nuts it's better. (Laughs)

FK: You're a member of the Rotary Club?

WI: Yeah.

FK: And how long have you been a member?

WI: Since 1950, so I've been there 30 years already.

FK: How do you feel about the Rotarians and what they've been doing in Kona?

WI: Well the best project that they had was when Dr. Hayashi was a member, we used to buy equipment for the Kona Hospital, certain equipment that the county don't supply. (This went on for many years. With the new hospital, all equipment are furnished by the state.)

FK: Oh, for the medical . . .

WI: The medical thing, that was one of our projects. Then other than that we don't do anything common in community.

FK: You mentioned you went to Konawaena Adult School?

WI: That's where I finished my high school. I got a high school diploma.

FK: When was that?

WI: 1964, I think. Graduate Konawaena in 1964. Oh, there were quite a few members. I don't know the number exactly, I think about 20 graduate in my class.

FK: Oh, really?

WI: Yeah.

FK: How many children do you have?

WI: Two boys, no daughters.

FK: You have any grandchildren?

WI: Seven grandchildren.

FK: Any great-grandchildren?

WI: One great-grandchild. (Laughs)

FK: Do you recall any colorful people, individuals, in Kona? Yeah, you know, people who did interesting things in Kona or you know, who you might have a story about anybody in Kona?

WI: Oh, that's a hard question. (Laughs) Have you interviewed Morihara, old man? I think he's very good. I think he did a lot of things for Kona.

FK: His son is working for you?

WI: Yeah, he's here, he's good boy.

FK: Well, what made you stay in Kona?

WI: I like the climate, I like the people.

FK: Did you ever think of leaving Kona?

WI: I like to stay, this is the best place for me, I like it.

FK: Have you been to Japan?

WI: I've been there twice.

FK: Did you get to see your parents then?

WI: My parents were gone already when I went over; so, I met some relatives. I think Japan is a nice, pretty country, you know. You've been there, huh? You like Japan?

FK: Yes.

WI: What part of Japan do you like?

FK: Well, I haven't seen all of it yet.

WI: Japan is a very pretty land, pretty place. I never lived there in winter so I don't know, but I think winter is all right if you're well-to-do you can move South, spend your winter down South. If you want cold you go to Hokkaido. So generally I know, like Hokkaido to Kyushu, Kagoshima, it's a very nice country.



FK: Well, that's all we have for now.

WI: Okay, lucky you have a lot of material in there.

FK: Is there any particular story that you want to tell?

WI: I tell you some other day.

FK: Okay. (Laughs) Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW

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## **Volume I**

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**Ethnic Studies Program  
University of Hawaii, Manoa**

**JUNE 1981**